

CHANSON AT MADISON SQUARE

Benét, Stephen Vincent, 1898-1943

You live in the Terminal Building, I
In the Metropolitan Tower.
This is what I send you every night,
A flash of red and a flash of white,
The red for our hearts and their pulse that is Delight,
The white for power.

You have hung your home with crimson lamps,
Apples swinging on a tree,
They band like a ring round that tall stone thumb,
They ladder up its sides like the spillings of a plum,
I must climb and pick them all ere our double kingdom come
Where the motors roar like sea.

You have crowned your hall with granite thorns,
Mine stands huge as steam.
It carries all Time like a watch upon its side,
And the slow hands sway like the cautious feet of Pride,
Doling out mortality to Moloch and his bride,
And to us the clear Edens of our dream.

The city lies at ease and her lazy paws of light
Claw idly up and down the sky,
She strikes peacock-Night on his phosphorescent fans,
And he shudders into jewels and his eyed and blinking vans
Shake their ocean-nurtured purple on the turrets that are Man's,
And I love you and we cannot die.

Shut your eyes — you are tired — let the blue bed of air
Be your pillow through the hot short night.
We are children lost together in a wood turned rock.
We are gods whose eyes are Wisdom, and Olympus is our mock.
Drowse into your Paradise! I say above the clock
"White — red — white — red — white!"